

Do not fear: I am with you;
do not be anxious:
I am your God.
I will strengthen you,
I will help you,
I will uphold you.
~ Isaiah 41:10

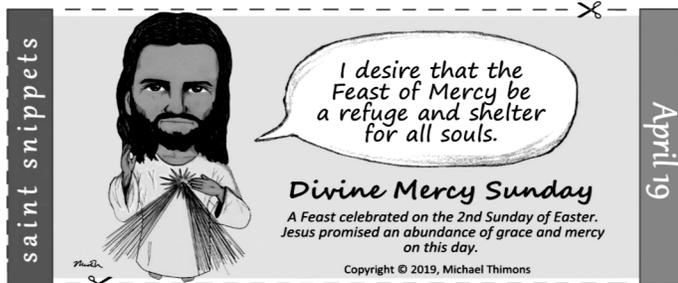


Saint Anselm (1033-1109)

April 21

For anyone disheartened at how easily contemporary discussions of disputed church-state issues escalate from civil discourse to shrill polemic, Anselm provides perspective. Grounded in the Benedictine Rule's balanced "prayer and work," this monk-scholar, called from his abbey to become Archbishop of Canterbury, was thrust into firestorms of political intrigue, himself the target of warring bishops and nobles, kings and popes. Yet from depths of inner peace, Anselm wrote this moving exhortation by which today's Liturgy of the Hours celebrates him: "Rise up, insignificant man! From your preoccupations, flee a while. From your turbulent thoughts, hide for a time. Your crushing responsibilities cast aside. Your burdensome business lay down. Free a little space for God. Rest a little while in him!" "Faith seeking understanding" was his strikingly contemporary motto; and though renowned as an erudite philosopher-theologian, Anselm also left personal letters, profound for their insights on Christian friendship. Along with those, he composed "A Prayer for My Friends" and "A Prayer for My Enemies," reminding us that those who love God most passionately are also those who love others most humanly.

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Get Real!

Those of us who flatter ourselves that we have a "realistic" view of the world may listen to the first reading today and say, "Get real!" when we hear Luke's account of the early, Elysian days of the Christian movement. All seems to be rosy, lots of wonders are performed, everyone shares selflessly, they eat together in "exultation," and the Lord added to their numbers? Well, who wouldn't be attracted to a group like this? From the wind that swept through the upper room at Pentecost as the Spirit of God blew over the face of the waters in Genesis, and the fire that appeared over each disciple as the light appeared at the dawn of creation, Luke's intent in Acts is to show a new creation, a restoration of creation's original goodness through the working of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who continues to make us into the Body of Christ. We may occasionally, like Thomas in the Gospel, say, "Get real!" but our ultimate reality in the Spirit is to work continually to make our Christian community a new creation, one in which others will find God's joy and beauty.

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Readings for the Week

Monday:	Acts 4:23-31; Ps 2:1-9; Jn 3:1-8
Tuesday:	Acts 4:32-37; Ps 93:1-2, 5; Jn 3:7b-15
Wednesday:	Acts 5:17-26; Ps 34:2-9; Jn 3:16-21
Thursday:	Acts 5:27-33; Ps 34:2, 9, 17-20; Jn 3:31-36
Friday:	Acts 5:34-42; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Jn 6:1-15
Saturday:	1 Pt 5:5b-14; Ps 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17; Mk 16:15-20
Sunday:	Acts 2:14, 22-33; Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-11; 1 Pt 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35



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Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy); Julian Calendar Easter
Tuesday:	St. Anselm; Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)
Wednesday:	Administrative Professionals Day; Earth Day
Thursday:	St. George; St. Adalbert
Friday:	St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen; National Arbor Day
Saturday:	St. Mark

Today's Readings

First Reading — All who believed were devoted to the teachings of the apostles, the communal life, the breaking of the bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42-47).

Psalm — Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, his love is everlasting (Psalm 118).

Second Reading — God has given us an undiminished inheritance, safeguarded for us in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-9).

Gospel — The risen Christ comes to his disciples with peace and the Spirit. The absent Thomas doubts (John 20:19-31).

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Treasures From Our Tradition

One of the great Easter traditions is “mystagogy,” an ancient word meaning “reflection on the mysteries.” It is a style of catechesis, or passing on the faith. People who have shared an experience, in this case those who have been baptized at Easter, are urged to recall their experience, reflect on its meaning, and apply their insights to their new way of life.

There is an aspect of an experience that is simply not available until you’ve had it. For example, you may think you know weddings inside out; you’ve been to dozens, seen hundreds in the movies or on television, but until you’ve said “I do” to another, there is a certain knowledge unavailable to you. Those who go down into the waters of baptism as adults have similar experiences; they have all taken baths before, but not like this one! Mystagogy helps such persons to uncover the deep meaning of the experience, their sense of a new beginning, of God’s abundant love, of forgiveness, of community.

It takes time for the power of the Easter Vigil to work its wonders for us. Those who are newly baptized are called “neophytes,” meaning “newly planted.” The tender buds of spring need care and nurturing, and our new brothers and sisters need your prayer and your faithful example.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Poor Thomas. Singled out from among the disciples because he refused to believe what they were telling him—that they had seen, in the flesh, their friend and their Lord, Jesus Christ. Can any of us really blame him? All of the disciples were terrified, crestfallen, hiding. But what of Thomas? Just where was he when Jesus appeared the first time to the group huddled in fear? He had gone “out”—out of the community where his faith had life. Maybe this was actually a blessing for Thomas and not the curse associated with the “doubting Thomas” moniker bestowed on him by tradition. Oh, the divine mercy of the Lord! Could Thomas be the forerunner of all of us who come in fragile hope and uncertainty to the Christian community, so beautifully described in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles? Could Thomas be an ultimate exemplar of the faith described in the First Letter of Peter?

You Should’ve Been There!

Most of us have had the misfortune of missing something important simply by being absent, and then hearing about what happened. In today’s reading, unique to John’s Gospel, Thomas is the only apostle who was not around when Jesus appeared to his friends for the first time after his death and resurrection. They were frightened and grieving, not knowing what would happen to them. Remember, they found themselves to be fugitives, seemingly guilty by association with a criminal executed by government officials. Suddenly, Jesus was with them, beaming peace and mercy to his fragile followers. What joy! What a shock, too!

We will never know why Thomas had left their hiding

Divine Mercy Prayer

You expired, O Jesus,
but the source of life gushed forth for souls
and an ocean of mercy opened up for the whole
world.

O Fount of Life,
unfathomable Divine Mercy,
envelop the whole world
and empty Yourself out upon us.

O Blood and Water,
which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus
as a fount of mercy for us,

I trust in You.

Amen.

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place. All we know is that he returned to wild stories about Jesus being alive after dying a brutal death. He must have thought that the other apostles in their grief had a shared delusion of what they wished were true. When Thomas finally saw Jesus, he gave what is considered the most profound profession of faith: “My Lord and my God!” In his tender mercy, Jesus ministered to Thomas by helping him to see for himself.

We Walk By Faith

But what of us? The early Christian community could only trust the words of these same apostles, the ones Thomas couldn’t believe, when they preached Jesus Christ risen from the dead. Who could believe what they said? The Holy Spirit, breathed upon the disciples in that first encounter, emanated so powerfully from them that they were able to convene seemingly utopian communities of faith. Filled with “divine mercy,” their lives became an evangelization to the world.

And this is how we too are sent out, like the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit and bearing the Lord’s peace and mercy to a troubled, suffering world. The wounds of Jesus are very real today in the needy and broken. May we always work to bind up those wounds wherever we find them.

Today’s Readings: Acts 2:42–47; Ps 118:2–4, 13–15, 22–24; 1 Pt 1:3–9; Jn 20:19–31

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Sunday Readings

April 19, 2020

Second Sunday of Easter (or Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Reading 1

Acts 2:42–47

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 118:2–4, 13–15, 22–24

R. (1) Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Let the house of Israel say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say,
"His mercy endures forever."

Let those who fear the LORD say,
"His mercy endures forever."

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

I was hard pressed and was falling,
but the LORD helped me.

My strength and my courage is the LORD,
and he has been my savior.

The joyful shout of victory
in the tents of the just:

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made;
let us be glad and rejoice in it.

R. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

or:

R. Alleluia

Reading 2

1 Pt 1:3–9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you who by the power of God are safeguarded through faith, to a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the final time. In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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Divine Mercy

Gospel

Jn 20:19–31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

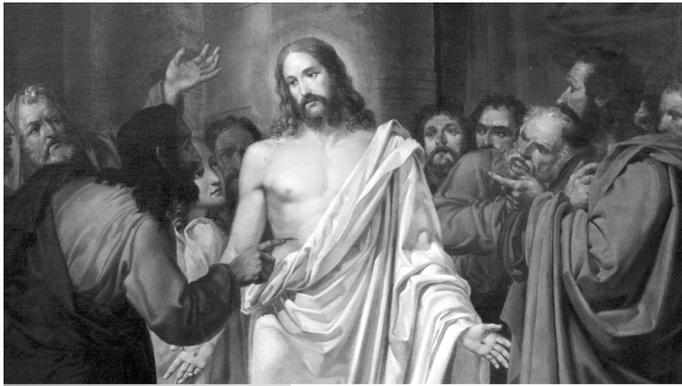
Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

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SECOND SUNDAY OF

Easter

(OR SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY)

APRIL 19, 2020

Jesus said to Thomas,
“Have you come to believe because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.”

John 20:29

Prayer of the Faithful

God has given us a new birth and a living hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and so we pray.

For Pope Francis and all leaders throughout the Church, that their profession of faith may draw us and the rest of the world closer to the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

For harmony among all people of the world as they come to know the peace of the risen Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who doubt, for those who have lost their faith, for those who have not yet found faith in God, let us pray to the Lord.

For first responders, for medical professionals, for all who care for those who are stricken with the Coronavirus and work to protect our communities, let us pray to the Lord.

For our community of faith as we strive to emulate the energy and enthusiasm of the early Christian communities, let us pray to the Lord.

For all those who have died, especially N., N., and N., and for all whose death was caused by the Coronavirus, that they may rest in the presence of the Risen Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

O merciful God,
you showed your everlasting love
in Jesus who died and rose from the dead
for our sakes.

Graciously hear these our prayers
and grant them according to your will
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord.

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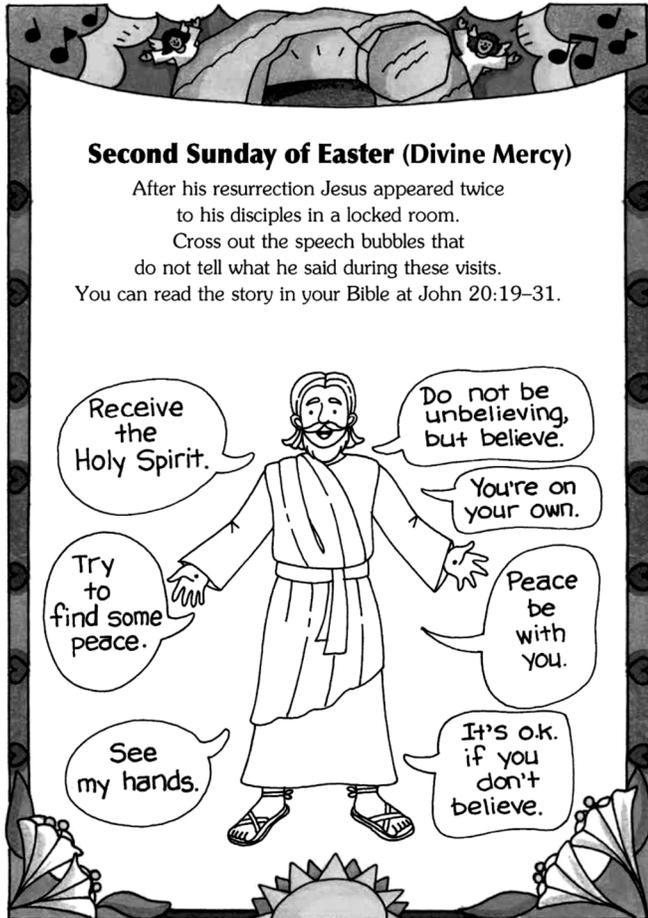
God's Word for Children

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy)

After his resurrection Jesus appeared twice to his disciples in a locked room.

Cross out the speech bubbles that do not tell what he said during these visits.

You can read the story in your Bible at John 20:19-31.



Acts 2:42-47 tells us how the believers lived. They took care of each other. Decide which of the letters will complete this sentence about them. Write that letter in the blanks.

h n r

T_ey sold w_at
t_ey _ad,
t_en s_ared
w_at was
made.

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Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

John 20:19

CATHOLIC CORNER

DIVINE MERCY

Today's first reading (Acts 2:42-47) presents a beautiful account of life among the early followers of Jesus, the people known as Christians. This list of the things they did showed people that they were continuing the work of Jesus. Next to these descriptions from the Acts of the Apostles, write how you continue that work today.



- They gathered for the breaking of the bread.

I do the same when I _____

- They prayed together.

I do the same when I _____

- They offered what they owned to help those in need.

I do the same when I _____

- They lived their lives praising God.

I do the same when I _____



This second Sunday of Easter is also called Divine Mercy Sunday. One of the most important characteristics of a Christian is the ability to forgive. Jesus even forgave those who put him on the cross. He told his followers that they must do the same. Jesus also forgives us when we find it too hard to do what he asks.

- The early Christians forgave one another.

I do the same when I _____

- The early Christians were not afraid to ask forgiveness. They knew that Jesus was full of mercy.

I do the same when I _____

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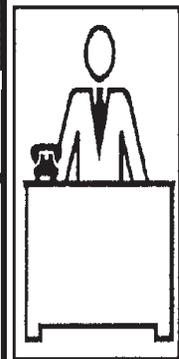
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